

## Social Marketing

Social marketing is the use of commercial marketing techniques to promote health or some other social good. Social marketing techniques include:

- **Audience segmentation and profiling** through formative research. The goal is to find audience segments whose members have certain things in common -- they pay attention to the same communication channels (e.g., certain television talk show hosts) and are likely to respond positively to the same messages. Demographic (e.g., age, income, race, gender), psychographic (e.g., readiness for change), and lifestyle (e.g., leisure time pursuits) categories are used to draw the boundaries of a target audience segment.
- A **4 “P’s” analysis** (product, price, place, promotion). Whether you are selling a physical product or something intangible like safer behavior, the first three “p’s” suggest taking steps to make your “product” seem attractive, affordable (in terms of money and emotional costs like embarrassment), and convenient to access. Promotional/advertising considerations are brought to bear in trying to get clear, effective, memorable messages to the largest proportion of your target audience while you stay within your budget constraints.
- **Emphasizing product benefits** from the consumer’s point of view. Some people already buy or do what you are trying to promote to other people much like them. What do the “doers” think they stand to gain by behaving that way? These are the beneficial aspects of your “product” that you should promote to those who don’t yet meet your behavioral objective.
- Getting **constant consumer feedback** and refining your marketing strategy on the basis of this input. You may not be able to afford formal consumer surveys, but focus groups and other quick means of polling your audience should drive continuous improvements in your marketing approach.

These social marketing techniques help service providers develop, target, deliver and evaluate prevention messages. In a nutshell, they help make protective behavior seem easy, fun and popular.

For more information about social marketing, see:

Andreasen, A.R. (1995). *Marketing social change: Changing behavior to promote health, social development, and the environment*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.